THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF COMMERCE AND INDUSTRY (SHRI E.V.K.S. ELANGOVAN): (a) and (b) Yes, Sir. Based on the Medium Term Export Strategy, an IT based information dissemination plan has been implemented for the tea industry which provides for disseminating the information to various stakeholders including growers, manufacturers, buyers, exporters, brokers and officials. The Tea Board has accordingly setup a new internet based portal called www.indiateaportal.com which has 28 identified categories of information, including statistics, news, articles, weather directories etc. The new portal has an auction engine built into it and the same is being used for progressively converting the manual auction centres into electronic auction centres. The infrastructure for conducting electronic auctions, including hardware, software and VSAT connectivity has so far been set up at Coimbatore, Guwahati, Cochin and Coonoor.

(c) Does not arise

Effect of Climate on Production of Tea, Coffee and Cotton

1565. SHRI MATILAL SARKAR:

SHRI TARINI KANTA ROY:

Will the Minister of COMMERCE AND INDUSTRY be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that the production of tea, coffee and cotton has been affected by climatic reasons in different parts of the country;

(b) the quantity of tea, coffee and cotton grown during the year 2002-03, 2003-04 and 2004-05;

(c) the number of gardens and factories connected with these commodities that have closed down during the the last three years; and

(d) the steps Government proposed take to boost up growers, workers and the system of marketing of these commodities?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF COMMERCE AND INDUSTRY (SHRI E.V.K.S. ELANGOVAN): (a) Tea production was affected during 2004-05 due to adverse climatic condition and there was an overall decline of about 31 million kgs. over the previous year. As far as coffee is concerned, due to adverse weather conditions experienced in the last two-three crop years, the production has fallen to 2.75 lakh tonnes in 2002-03 and 2.70 lakh tonnes in 2003-04 from the level of 3 lakh tonnes in 2000-01 and 2001-02. As per available information, production of cotton does not seem to have been affected during 2003-04 and 2004-05.

(b) Details of production of tea, coffee and cotton during 2002-03, 2003-04 and 2004-05 are as follows:

Commodity	2002-2003*	2003-2004	2004-05*
Tea (in million kgs.)	837.60	850.49	765.15 (April, 04 to January, 05)
Coffee (in tonnes)	275275	270500	290800 (estimated for the whole year)
Cotton (in lakh bales of 170 kgs. each)	87.16	137.88	170.68

*ESTIMATED

(c) As per available information, during the course of last three years, 80 tea gardens passed through the process of closure or suspension of work. However, as on 31.12.2004, 32 tea gardens are lying closed.

So far as coffee is concerned, as per available information, 13 coffee estates were closed down/locked out some time or other. However, as on date, all these estates are reported to have been reopened.

As per the report "Census of cotton ginning and pressing factories in India—a techno-economic Study", there were 673 closed ginning and pressing factories in 2001-02.

(d) A number of measures have been taken to help the tea and coffee industries. Measures taken to help the tea growers include, withdrawal of the additional duty of excise of Re. 1 per kg. on tea in the Union Budget for 2005-06, setting up of a special fund with collections of additional duty of excise on tea of Re. 1 per Kg. during the years 2003-04 and 2004-05 for the long term development and modernisation of the tea plantation sector, implementation of a Special Tea Term Loan (STTL) for the tea sector, implementation of a price subsidy scheme for small tea growers for a four month period from February to May 2004, implementation of a price sharing formula between small tea growers and manufacturers of tea *w.e.f.* 1.4.2004 etc.

Measures taken to help the coffee growers include rephasement/ restructuring of loans taken by the coffee growers from commercial banks by way of Special Coffee Term Loan (SCTL), interest subsidy to large and small coffee growers on repayment of working capital loans taken from financial institutions, reduction of import duty on specified machinery for coffee sector to 5% to enable the industry to improve the productivity and quality of coffee for making it globally competitive. Commercial banks

have also agreed to extend crop loans upto a maximum of Rs. 50 lakhs at 9% interest so as to benefit the coffee growers having land holdings upto 60 hectares.

Both Tea and Coffee Boards are also implementing a number of developmental schemes during the Tenth Five Year Plan for enhancing productivity, quality and marketability of these commodities produced in the country. Government has also reduced the import duty on items of machinery used to improve productivity and quality of tea and coffee to an all inclusive rate of 5%.

The Tea and Coffee Boards also support some welfare programmes and activities for the benefit of the workers and their dependants in areas like education, health care etc.

The measures taken to boost the system of marketing of tea include implementation of an IT based Information Dissemination Plan for the tea industry, including conversion of manual auction centres into electronic auction centres which is expected to improve the efficiency of the tea purchase systems and reduce transaction time and costs. Tea and Coffee Boards are also taking a number of measures for market development such as implementation of a medium term export strategy, participation in major trade fairs/exhibitions abroad, generic promotion efforts through public relation campaigns etc.

Government of India has launched the Technology Mission on Cotton (TMC) in February, 2000 to address the issues of raising productivity, improving quality and reducing the cost of production for providing the much needed competitive advantage to the textile industry alongwith ensuring attractive returns to the farmers. The Mission consists of 4 Mini Missions. These Mini Missions relate to improvement in marketing infrastructure and include the revival of dormant market yards, improvement In existing market yards and setting up of new market yards. These also aim at modernization of ginning and pressing factories thereby improving the quality of cotton by reducing contamination, ensuring better prices to growers.

Export target for 2004-05

1566. SHRI VIJAY J. DARDA: Will the Minister of COMMERCE AND INDUSTRY be pleased to state:

(a) what is the estimated export target for the year 2004-05, how much export earnings have accrued in the last three quarters of this finanical year;